

Obama wins Nobel

FROM PAGE 1
Obama said he was "humbled" by the distinction but criticism built over how the award could be given so quickly.

"Only very rarely has a person to the same extent as Obama captured the world's attention and given its people hope for a better future," the Nobel jury said in making the stunning announcement.

The committee attached "special importance to Obama's vision and work for a world without nuclear weapons" and said he had created "a new climate in international politics."

Obama, 48, took office on January 20 and has sought to restore US standing after widespread criticism over the war in Iraq and the world superpower's attitude to efforts to control global warming.

The first black American president has brought the Israeli and Palestinian leaders together for a meeting, approved new diplomatic engagement with Iran, Myanmar and North Korea and signalled a new willingness to attack growing environmental problems.

Obama went to Cairo to make a major speech on relations with the Muslim world, badly tarnished by President George W. Bush's order to invade Iraq. At the United Nations, he has launched an initiative to reduce the number of nuclear weapons.

The US president was awoken at 6:00am at the White House by his spokesman to be told of the award. An administration official quoted Obama as saying he felt "humbled".

Obama was honoured "for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples," the head of the Norwegian Nobel Committee Thorbjørn Jagland said.

"We had no problem... It was a unanimous decision," he said.

The jury said: "Dialogue and negotiations are preferred as instruments for resolving even the most difficult international conflicts. The vision of a world free from nuclear arms has powerfully stimulated disarmament and arms control negotiations," it said.

"Thanks to Obama's initiative, the US is now playing a more constructive role in meeting the great climatic changes the world is confronting."

The committee said it was seeking to encourage Obama's ideals rather than recognise concrete results.

Speaking to AFP, Jagland said: "It was unavoidable to give the prize to the man who has improved the international climate and emphasised negotiations and dialogue."

"Before he took office the situation was so dangerous. Step by step he has given the message to the world that he wants to negotiate on all conflicts, strengthen the United Nations and work for a world without any nuclear arms."

Poland's anti-communist leader Lech Walesa, who won the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize, said it was too early to reward Obama now.

"Who, Obama? So fast? Too fast - he hasn't had the time to do anything yet," Walesa told reporters in Warsaw.

"For the time being Obama's just making proposals. But sometimes the Nobel committee awards the prize to encourage responsible action."

Still, the US remains at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US Congress has yet to pass a law reducing carbon emissions and there has been little significant reduction in global nuclear stockpiles since Obama took office.

The award appeared to be a slap at President George W. Bush from a committee that harshly criticised Obama's predecessor for his largely unilateral military action in the wake of the Sept. 11 terror attacks. The Nobel committee praised Obama's creation of "a new climate in international politics" and said he had returned multilateral diplomacy and institutions like the UN to the centre of the world stage.

In Afghanistan, Taliban militia spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid condemned the prize. "We have seen no change in his strategy for peace. He has done nothing for peace in Afghanistan."

"We hope that this gives him the incentive to walk in the path of bringing justice to the world order," a spokesman for Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said.

and in terms of multilateral diplomacy," the 69-year-old Yunus told AFP.

"He has excited the young people of the world. There's now meaning and direction for the world," Yunus said.

"It's an endorsement of him and the direction he is taking. It's as much about what he will achieve as what he has already achieved. It's a powerful message that the peace prize has given."

In August, Obama presented Yunus with the Presidential Medal of Freedom during a ceremony in Washington.

2 'outlaws'
FROM PAGE 16
His accomplices, however, managed to escape. Police recovered one LG gun and four bullets from the spot.

Amirul was accused in 12 cases including eight for murder filed with different police stations in Kushtia, police said.

Our staff correspondent in Khulna reports: Nirapada Bairagi was killed in a shootout between his associates and police around 3:10am at Ranai village of Dumuria upazila in Khulna yesterday.

He was the son of Shannashi Bairagi of Sajarha village of the upazila.

Fauzul Kabir, officer-in-charge of Dumuria Police Station, said the law enforcers raided the spot following a tip-off that some outlaws were holding a secret meeting.

Sensing presence of the police, the outlaws opened fire prompting them to retaliate that triggered a gunfight.

At one stage, the outlaws fled the scene leaving Nirapada dead.

According to Khulna police super, two policemen received bullets in their legs during the 35-minute long gunfight. They are undergoing treatment at the Dumuria Health Complex.

The outlaws fired twenty shots while police retaliated and fired 11 rounds in self-defence, police super added.

Police recovered a shutter gun, three cartridges, a rifle bullet and five empty shells from the scene.

The deceased was wanted in several murder, kidnaping and dacoity cases, OC added.

Dejected
FROM PAGE 16
NGOs, the Contempt of Courts Act 1926, laws for protection of environment, laws for protection of the consumer rights, laws of Intellectual Properties, the reformation and consolidation of the laws related to ground water management, wetland and open space conservation and against grabbing of river and canal water sources.

Amendment of certain provisions of Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000, Drug Control Act 1990, Anti Terrorism Act 2009, Smoke and Tobacco Control Act 2005, Shalish Act 2001, Cinematograph Act 1918, The Penal Code 1860, The Code of Civil Procedure 1908 and The Code of Criminal Procedure 1898, repealing the law of vested properties, Sarais Act 1867, Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act 1936 and Arya Marriage Validation Act 1937 and making new laws are also in the planning.

Ombudsman
FROM PAGE 1
The ombudsman is also empowered to ask any ministry and statutory public authority to take legal, departmental or disciplinary actions against an individual found guilty.

If the ombudsman is not satisfied with the action taken, he may prepare and send a special report on the case to the president.

The ombudsman will also prepare an annual report on discharging of his functions and submit it to the president who will place it in parliament for discussion.

The law also empowers the ombudsman to punish any person for obstructing his functioning with simple imprisonment of up to three months, or with fine of up to Tk2,000, or both.

At present, the parliamentary standing committees oversee the functions of various ministries, but they are facing limitations of powers and logistic support to perform their duties to ensure accountability of the executive to parliament.

The law minister said once the office of the ombudsman is established, it will largely assist in the efforts to establish good governance.

Trial of open

FROM PAGE 1
Previously, during the last caretaker government regime a national coal committee headed by ex-Buet vice-chancellor Prof Abdul Matin Patwari in 2008 recommended turning Barapukuria into an open pit mine on a test basis.

In a separate development, the Barapukuria Coal Mine Authority is conducting a report on whether an open pit mine is possible there by compiling the mine's data of its north and central location.

This report will be presented to Petrobangla soon, sources say.

If open pit mining in Barapukuria is found feasible, the government would spearhead the new mining project as a test case. If it is successful, the government would consider larger scale open pit mining, the sources point out.

The country's future demand for coal will shoot up significantly as the Power Development Board (PDB) is preparing to implement four 500 mw power projects based on imported coal.

These plants are intended to be implemented by 2014. If the Barapukuria mine can be developed into an open pit mine, it could cater a part of the demands of these plants.

The energy ministry in this connection last Thursday held a meeting with officials of UNDP, GTZ, Petrobangla, Barapukuria Coal Mine Company Ltd, Power Development Board (PDB) and Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company, Energy Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr Towfik-e-Elahi Chowdhury and State Minister for Energy Enamul Haq, among others, were present.

The UNDP made a presentation on various aspects of coal mining on the basis of studying various methodologies, while GTZ talked about its different social aspects.

The meeting discussed the possibility of open pit mines in two areas -- Phulbari and Barapukuria -- and converged that Barapukuria should be the first such case.

"But we need huge data to decide on an open pit mine here to extract coal from its northern and central zones. We need to conduct aerial survey and undertake feasibility study quickly," says a meeting source. Such mining will need an overhauled new mining design.

The existing underground mine's operational contract with its Chinese developer will end in 2011, while the government will complete all payment against the Chinese supplier's credit for this project by 2012.

While other factors are also favourable for turning Barapukuria into an open pit mine, the national committee on protection of oil and gas has been opposing open pit mining in the country. The committee argues that this would cause environmental damage and people would lose arable land.

This committee has however not opposed to underground mining.

However, in reality the underground Barapukuria mine has already damaged arable land and underground water tables to a great extent as the mine design had never considered any environmental aspects.

The land damage has angered villagers around the mine, for which the Awami League government back in May signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with

Khaleda
FROM PAGE 16
Followers of Khoka last week sat for a meeting and decided to collect the signatures for submission before Khaleda so that she can announce the city committee soon.

Khaleda, however, sharply reacted to the move and expressed resentment over the activities of two rival groups. "What have you all started? You can't do everything according to your own wishes," she said.

Party insiders said seeing the chairperson's mood, Khoka followers did not dare to submit the papers containing signatures. "Now there is no possibility of submitting the signatures to the chairperson," a city leader close to Khoka told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the leaders met the chairperson and exchanged views over the committee so that nobody needs to submit any papers with signatures.

Hearing the news followers of Abbas, also a former DCC mayor, arranged different meetings and termed the Khoka follower's signature campaign a conspiracy against the party.

the villagers assuring them of compensation and relocation.

About 4.2 square kilometres area of the underground Barapukuria coalmine site will eventually subside up to a maximum depth of two metres in the mine's 30 years lifetime, Petrobangla sources say.

Such subsidence will create a large lake, the sources point out. Residents of three to four villages -- which are not densely populated like most other villages of the country -- adjacent to the mine will eventually have to be relocated.

Land subsidence in the mining area has been reported from 2006. In addition, an improper subsoil water extraction plan has dried up the common water reservoirs for around 15 adjacent villages.

Further, the mine is releasing environmentally hazardous water through canals affecting agriculture there.

The government is also working on developing a mining city in Barapukuria which would not only help voluntary relocation of the affected people but also function as a centre for mining education and provide jobs and other facilities.

A committee in this connection recommended several months ago that the Barapukuria land area outside the mine which has subsided or will subside in future should be acquired by paying premium to the owners.

The 2,500-acre underground mine area includes 650 acres of agriculture land on the surface. The mine is directly affecting living of about 2,500 people in seven or eight villages.

"Resettlement of these people should not be very costly for the government," says a source.

The country imports around three million tonnes of low quality coal from India worth more than a thousand crore taka each year to cater the needs of brick kilns and various industries.

Rights envoys
FROM PAGE 16
Government of Bangladesh. The ambassadors are expected to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, State Minister for Home Affairs Shamsul Haque Tuku, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin and Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs State Minister Dipankar Talukder.

Ambassador of Sweden who currently holds the EU Presidency and the ambassadors of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark in Dhaka will accompany the human rights ambassadors, the release added.

They will also meet with the National Human Rights Commission, the Bangladesh Election Commission, the Inspector General of Police, the Director General of Bangladesh Rifles and the Director General of Rapid Action Battalion.

Besides, they will meet with representatives of civil society organisations and with leaders of Bangladesh think tanks in order to discuss issues of common concern.

The delegation will also visit the UNHCR Kutupalong refugee camp near Cox's Bazar.

7 JMB men
FROM PAGE 16
Officer-in-charge of the police station said.

"Our operations against the JMB will continue and we are now trying to nab all the district level commanders of the outfit," said Additional Superintendent of Police Zannatul Hasan.

Hailed from Chapainawabganj, Ashraf has two wives. His first wife is JMB's woman wing commander.

Terming Ashraf a hardened militant, a police official said, as he was being taken to the Boalia Police Station from Rajshahi Metropolitan Police headquarters, Ashraf told him, "I will be in your place on the judgement day when I will order you and you have to follow."

The police also recovered a number of books on jihad, eight mobile phone sets, computers and CDs from their possession.

Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh Chief Asadullah Al Galib, international terrorist suspect Abdur Razzak Bin Yusuf, Jamaat-e Islami founder Sayed Abul Ala Moududi, Jamaat's Assistant Secretary General Mujibur Rahman and Hizb-ut Tawhid Chief Bayazid Khan Ponny were the writers of some of the books recovered.

7 students

FROM PAGE 16
Chudanga Govt College and the rest from the city's Jagannath University, Mirpur Bangla College and Titumir College, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star.

Police arrested them in separate raids from the TSC intersection on DU campus and room no 410 of Ziaur Rahman Hall in the university at around 3:00am.

DJ Proctor Dr KM Saiful Islam was present during the raid.

OC Rezaul said police arrested them by tracking their cell phones on information from a guardian that they were demanding Tk 5 lakh in exchange of providing a copy of the question of the medical college admission test from an applicant.

A case will be filed against the arrestees, he added.

Situation still

FROM PAGE 1
"We should not sit idle and take all necessary measures immediately," said Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of Dhaka University. Talking to The Daily Star he said the government would have to address the issue with utmost importance in regional and international forums immediately.

Highly placed sources in the government said the foreign minister is trying to trim down the tension between the two next-door neighbours through bilateral talks.

The tension grew as the Myanmar military junta deployed huge troops with heavy weapons within five kilometres of the border and many of them frequently intruded into Bangladesh territory.

Sources from borders said this week the Myanmar's military junta had deployed at least five light infantry battalions within five kilometres of border on their side. Bangladesh considers about 50 km land border from 31 to 56 international border pillars as most threatened by the Myanmar forces.

Myanmar troops also fired several shots towards Bangladesh territory, on Wednesday, sources said.

Bangladesh reinforced its troops along the border with Myanmar as tension went high following repeated provocative acts by the latter's military forces including violation of international border law and illegal construction of barbed-wire fences along the frontier.

In recent years and months, Myanmar authorities have constructed new roads, bunkers along the borders, renovated a nearby airport and started fencing the border as part of its provocative activities.

Prof Imtiaz opined that it would be tough for Bangladesh to push-back huge number of unregistered Rohingyas to Myanmar if its troops complete constructing barbed wire fence through the two country's border and increases its troops there.

No case filed
FROM PAGE 16
Ship Breakers Association in the evening to reach an understanding.

"If the allegation was not true, why is he calling us to the meeting?" Siraj said.

The grabbing was led by the lawmaker's son Noman and everyone witnessed it," he said, adding that Noman also had an altercation with him over the matter.

Some 200 men of SM Al Mamun and SM Al Noman--sons of lawmaker Abul Kashem, reportedly encroached on and attached some 10 acres of land of Pakija Enterprise and other three adjoining ship-breaking yards to their under-construction yard Uniques Traders on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, police arrested Golam Mostafa and Sahab Uddin in connection with the case filed by Rashed Mahmud, a senior photo-journalist of Prothom Alo's Chittagong office, and Pranab Baul, Prothom Alo staff reporter, for physical assault on them, damaging valuables and threatening them with death.

Britain building Pakistan border force camp

AFP, London

Britain is building a training camp for Pakistan's paramilitary Frontier Corps to help in the fight against the Taliban in the lawless border area with southern Afghanistan, a report said yesterday.

The Times said Britain also planned to base 24 army trainers at the camp in the southwestern province of Baluchistan for a three-year stint from August next year, when construction is due to finish.

The British personnel would work alongside six US trainers at the camp, which is designed to house 550 people, the newspaper reported, quoting a senior official at the British High Commission in Islamabad.

The camp will train 360 Frontier Corps soldiers at a time, on 12-week courses, the official said.

The report said the plan was politically sensitive because the British and US trainers will be the first foreign forces formally stationed in Baluchistan since Pakistan's independence in 1947, although US special forces operated there during the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

The development has historical resonance for Britain, which founded the Frontier Corps in 1907 to control rebellious tribes on the North West Frontier, and used to recruit and train troops for the army in Baluchistan.

The British official emphasised to the Times that British and US personnel at the camp would conduct only "conventional military training" and would not operate alongside Pakistani forces outside its confines.

The Frontier Corps recruits would be taught basic skills such as how to deal with an improvised explosive device, how to man a checkpoint and search a vehicle, how to handle light weapons and how to perform first aid.

US officials believe that top Afghan Taliban leaders are sheltering in Quetta, the provincial capital of the border

BDR man
FROM PAGE 16
Yasin felt sick and fell down from a chair after the Fazr prayers. He was then rushed to Thakurgaon hospital where the doctor on duty declared him dead, a BDR press release issued yesterday said.

It is observed that after each death incident, the BDR authorities had given excuses of cardiac attacks or suicidal attempts.

However, on the basis of autopsy report New Market police filed two cases on October 2 for killing lance nayek Mobarak Hossain of Battalion-29 and havildar Mahiuddin of Battalion-28 of Chittagong.

49 killed in suicide

FROM PAGE 1
Flames rose from the wreckage of cars caught in the devastation. At least 12 shops were completely destroyed in the blast.

"There was blood and pieces of human body everywhere. People were crying in pain for help," said Miskeen Khan, who received shrapnel wounds to his face.

Ghulam Nabbi, a shopkeeper at the Khyber Bazaar, told AFP: "It was like somebody threw me out of my shop. For some time my mind stopped working, but then I started running to a safe place."

Police official Mohammad Karim estimated the size of the bomb at about 100 kilograms (220 pounds), while Shafiq Malik, chief of the bomb disposal squad, confirmed that a suicide attacker was responsible.

The device was planted in the door panels of the vehicle and included machinegun ammunition, designed to inflict maximum casualties, Malik said.

"The suicide attacker was sitting in the vehicle," he added.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, but provincial minister Bilour blamed the Taliban.

"The target was civilians. The Taliban want to pressure government by such attacks, but we will never bow down to them. Operations will continue until the last militant is eliminated," he told AFP.

region, and using the area to coordinate attacks on international troops in Afghanistan.

Pakistan was the chief ally of Afghanistan's extremist Taliban until the September 11, 2001 attacks, when then military ruler Pervez Musharraf changed tack to make Islamabad the key partner in the US-led "war on terror."

A wide-ranging review of US policy in Afghanistan has concluded that the Taliban poses less of a threat to US security than al-Qaeda, the White House said this week.

The findings raise speculation that President Barack Obama may not opt for a vastly increased counter-insurgency force in Afghanistan.

The commander of US and international forces in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, has reportedly asked Obama to send up to 40,000 more troops.

BNP blasts

FROM PAGE 1
The BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

Former minister MK Anwar and Press Secretary to the chairperson Maruf Kamal Khan Soheli were present.

On October 5, the cabinet with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair approved the amendment to the act.

Osman Farruk also urged the parliament and parliamentary standing committees concerned to reject those amendments, which the cabinet approved on Monday.

"Only ruling party backed companies will be beneficiaries of these amendments but many competent and experienced contractors might not get work," he said.

By amending the act's provision to include "less than five percent price proposal than the estimated price will not be acceptable" the government will be deprived of the most convenient services at the lowest price, he added.

Farruk said the present government is busy grabbing public money instead of resolving crises like price hike of essentials, deteriorating law and order, traffic congestion and load shedding.

MK Anwar said the administration would be held hostage by ruling party activists because of these amendments in procurement act and there will be no accountability by the tenders under Tk 2 crore, which will have negative impact on country's economy.

He said tender terrorism and extortions are raging across the country, because of which the government cannot implement the Annual Development Programme.

"The GDP growth and exports also decreased and there is no investment. Foreign exchange earnings by the readymade garment industries have also fallen," he added.

tribal belt on the Afghan border.

The offensives, coupled with an increase in drone attacks by US aircraft targeting Islamists in the northwest, have provoked a furious reaction from the Taliban militia based in the tribal belt.

Despite reports of fierce fighting among the militants after the death of Baitullah Mehsud, the Taliban appear to have regrouped, analysts say, with new commander Hakimullah Mehsud keen to show his strength.

"Increasing militant attacks now reflect that they have found space to regroup and launch fresh attacks," said Ishtiaq Ahmed, an international relations professor at Islamabad's Quaid-i-Azam University.

Peshawar is the main city in the northwest and has been a frequent target of militants linked to the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

Pakistan, on the frontline of the United States' war on al-Qaeda, has been hit by a wave of bombings that have killed nearly 2,200 people across the nuclear-armed country over the past two years.

Friday's blast is the deadliest in Pakistan since March this year, when a suicide bomber attacked a packed mosque in the northwestern town of Jamrud at prayer time, killing around 50 people.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on Monday on a UN office in Islamabad that killed five aid workers.

The latest attacks come as US President Barack Obama mulls sending extra troops to fight an increasing Taliban insurgency in neighbouring Afghanistan.